JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

Vsuch 1 2007

VOL. 131

No. 21

MISSISSIPPI

Witnessing Through Media turns 20

By William H. Perkins, Jr. Editor

Broadcast media specialists from churches across the Mississippi **Baptist** Convention gathered at Park Place Church, Brandon, on May 4-5 for the twentieth annual Witnessing Through Media Conference sponsored the Communication Services Department of the Mississippi **Baptist** Convention Board (MBCB).

"Witnessing Through Media was begun 20 years ago to provide fellowship, inspiration, recognition, support, and training for local church workers involved in Christian media. This year's conference had 153 registrations, the largest number ever," said lan Richardson, MBCB communication services director.

"Every year a variety of workshops is offered to assist local churches in the areas of media ministry including television, radio, sound, web site, and video projection.

'Also at the annual meeting, an awards banquet is held to recognize outstanding work in the area of media ministry. For the 2007 banquet, the keynote speaker was Barbie Bassett, chief meteorologist for WLBT-TV in Jackson, and a member of Colonial Heights Church, Ridgeland," Richardson said.



BEST MEDIA — Witnessing Through Media 2007 award winners include (from left) Brian Rice and Jeffrey Thomas of Ridgecrest Church, Madison; Bryant May of First Church, Brandon; Scott Voge, Bobby Schumann, and Randy Blankeney of First Church, Laurel; Pam Warren and Damon Burgess of First Church, Jackson; Cheryl Bullock of Alta Woods Church, Jackson; Alan Stevens of Bel-Aire Church, Gulfport; and Frank Gunn of First Church, Biloxi. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Among the workshops conducted at the conference were:

 Nuts and Bolts of Camera Operation and Creative Production, both led by Don Moore and David Bunger.

 Sound Advice Basic and Advanced, both led by Trooper Hales.

• How to Get Started on the Web and Advanced Web Site Design, both led by J.C. Howell.

 Non-Linear Editing and Me? The Director, both led by Lynn Bullock.

• Projector Systems Forum, led by Joe Dillon.

"This event has steadily grown over the years and I believe there are several reasons for this," Richardson said. "First, we are continuing to listen to our churches in an attempt to offer the workshops that are vital to their media ministries. Secondly, we live in a special time when technology is rapidly advancing, and Mississippi Baptist churches understand that. Lastly, it is my belief that of all the valid and fruitful ways to reach our state and world for Jesus, the use of media will have a powerful and lasting impact."

Richardson said plans are

already underway for the 2008 Witnessing Through Media conference, to be held May 2-3 at Park Place Church.

"Our keynote speaker for the awards banquet will be Ted Baehr, editor-in-chief and publisher of Movieguide: A Family Movies to Entertainment," Richardson said. "According to the Movieguide web site, this is a ministry dedicated to 'redeeming the values of the mass media of entertainment

according to Biblical principles by influencing media executives and by informing and equipping moral people."

The nessing Through

Media conference is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative

Program. For more information on the annual conference or the other programs of the MBCB Services Communication Department, contact Richardson at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3378 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 378. E-mail: irichardson@mbcb.org. Web site: www.mbcb.org.



2007 Award Winners

Church Musicals
Division One First Church, Biloxi

A Singing Christmas Tree 2006

Division Two First Church, Jackson Carols by Candlelight

Feature Presentation First Church, Laurel Laurel vs. Long Beach

Magazine First Church, Brandon Walker Family Interview

<u>Commercial</u> Bel-Aire Church, Gulfport (1) Living Nativity (2) Katrina Remembrance Promotional Division One

Alta Woods Church, Jackson The Armor of God

Division Two First Church, Jackson Weekly Service Opening

Music Video **Division One** Main Street Church, Hattiesburg Citywide Christmas Special

> **Division Two** First Church, Laurel Gospel Singing USA

Most Creative Use of Video First Church, Brandon Kids Kamp

Worship Service Division One First Church, Brandon The Glory of Christmas

Division Two Bel-Aire Church, Gulfport Katrina Remembrance

Radio Program
Bel-Aire Church, Gulfport
Bel-Aire Radio Program

Special Audio Project Ridgecrest Church, Madison The Glory of Christmas

Best First Time Entry Ridgecrest Church, Madison End of the Beginning





Building destroyed, church saved

remember how impressed I was with the worship center at First Church, Lyman, when I was invited several years ago to be part of a Baptist Building team that made a presentation there. I recall the beauty and orderliness of that holy place because it was indication to me of not only the pride of the congregation but also their love and respect for the Heavenly Father when they gathered to worship Him there.

I'm sure there are manifold stories of devotion and sacrifice that made

such a wonderful structure possible, like virtually every other Mississippi Baptist church in existence. Only the names change from church to church, but the dedication to the cause does not. That's who Mississippi Baptists are.

That's what made it so hard to believe my own eyes when I saw that beautiful building just few days after Hurricane Katrina struck the Mississippi Gulf Coast in late August 2005 — or rather, what was left of that beautiful building.

Katrina had counted First Church, Lyman, on her long list of destroyed and damaged churches. The worship center was shat-

tered. The wall at the front of the property had completely collapsed, exposing the carefully-kept inside of the worship center to the elements. The torrential rains that accompanied Katrina had finished off what the mighty winds had overlooked.

Hymnbooks were strewn about, and shards of stained glass were scattered outside and around what was left of the room. The magnificent grand piano, which had so grandly accompanied the choir when I was there before, stood in the open, exposed to the elements, as were a great many more priceless items that had been used to bring glory to God on the Sunday before the storm.

Most heart-wrenching for me, though, was to see the magnificent steeple that once adorned the roof of the worship center now upended and crashed through that roof, its tip pointing downward into the worship center like a huge ballistic missile caught in the wiring above the few ceiling panels that remained.

The symbolism was not lost on me. The worship center had been pierced, and so had my heart. Many moments were spent in prayer for the people of First

Church, Lyman, and the many other churches that were damaged or destroyed by Katrina, that they (we) would have the faith and the determination to see the Lord glorified through this great loss.

That's exactly what has happened, as we near the second anniversary of that time of destruction and dismay. First Church, Lyman, is back, as are the majority of Mississippi Baptist churches along the Gulf Coast to one extent or another.

While state government and the secular news media focus on the comeback of the gambling industry on the Coast and celebrate every new or refurbished casino that opens, the restoration of churches and minstries has been ignored for the most

part. Big surprise.

The fact is that there is no greater comeback story than Mississippi Baptist churches, just as there are no greater Katrina relief



First Church, Lyman: after Katrina

stories than Mississippi Baptists and their Southern **Baptist** allies from around the country. We are back not all the way back, but we're getting there We give all the honor and glory to our Lord for all He has done to bring us to this point.



First Church, Lyman: today

The buildings may have been destroyed, but the churches have been saved. To borrow a phrase from the late Jerry Clower, "Ain't God good!"

William H. Perkins Jr. **Editor**

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Send news, communication, and address changes to: The Editor, BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

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VOLUME 131 • NUMBER 21 (ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$9.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items - one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

lietnam imprisons Christians for 'propoganda'

WASHINGTON (BP) -- A court in Vietnam has sentenced religious liberty advocates Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan, both Christians, to prison terms for "conducting propaganda activi-ties to harm the security of state."

The sentences were handed down May 11, the day after a congressional hearing in Washington in which witnesses urged the United States to pressure Vietnam to reverse its escalating human rights abuses.

Dai, 38, has been the primary legal defender for the country's Protestant churches and, with Nhan, also an attorney, has trained Vietnamese students to protect human rights.

Dai was sentenced to five years in prison, followed by four years of house arrest, and Nhan, 28, was sentenced to four years in prison and three years of house

arrest, according to various news reports.

Dai denied he had broken any laws, according to an Associated Press report. Vietnam's constitution states: "The citizen shall enjoy freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, the right to be informed, and the right to assemble, form associations and hold demonstrations in accordance with the provisions of the law."

Dai has been a member of the primary Hanoi congregation of the legally recognized Evangelical Church of Vietnam (North) since 2000, Compass Direct News Service reported. The church's pastor, Au Quang Vinh, said Nhan had just completed a doctrine course for new believers in preparation for her bap-

tism, according to Compass. Neither Dai nor Nhan have admitted guilt and are expected to appeal the sentences to the People's Supreme Court, the last court of appeal in Vietnam, Compass reported. They were arrested on March 26 and, according to

Compass, were "held incommunicado until May 2" for what the government claimed as "national security" reasons.

The May 11 trial of Dai and Nhan lasted only four hours, Compass reported. The deputy chief of Vietnam's state news

agency, Le Quoc Minh, in a May 10 news release accused Dai and Nhan of conspiring with "criminals and even terrorist organizations responsible for kidnappings, bombings and assassinations' abusing and right to "the freedom of speech by posting information on the Internet and giving inter-

views to overseas Vietnameseowned radio stations where he painted a biased and distorted picture of the country and its internal affairs," as quoted by Elizabeth Kendal of the World Evangelical Alliance's Religious Liberty Commission.

The pair also were accused of making allegations to diplomats and religious freedom organizations in the United States

that Vietnam is persecuting Christians.

Minh also charged that Dai had instructed his law office staff members to "travel to the northwestern, Central Highlands and southern provinces to contact Protestant clergymen and their followers who have shown hatred toward the government," as quoted by Compass. Information gathered by Dai and

Nhan, according to the state news agency, was "doctored, distorted and fabricated."

Dai has regularly posted pro-democracy essays on foreign websites and had started a weblog on the Reporters Sans Frontiers weblog shortly before his a (http://nguyenvandai.rsfblog.org).
The International Freedom

Expression Exchange report urged that protests be sent to Vietnamese authorities over the sentencing of Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan, "expressing deep concern about an apparent crackdown on leading pro-democracy activists and writers for their peaceful dissident activities.

The appeals should be sent to Vietnam's president: His Excellency Nguyen Minh Triet; President, Socialist Republic of Vietnam; c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Appeals also should be sent to Prime Minister Nguyên Tân Dung and Minister of Culture and Information Le Doan Hop, both at 1 Hoang Hoa Tham Street; Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

"Please note that there are no fax numbers available for the Vietnamese authorities, so you may wish to ask the diplomatic representative for Vietnam in your country to forward your appeals," the IFEX report noted. "It would also be advantageous to ask your country's diplomatic representatives in Vietnam to intervene in the case.'

Concerned U.S. citizens should contact Ambassador to Vietnam Michael W. Marine, appointed to his position in 2004, at the U.S. Embassy, 7 Lang Ha Street, Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The embassy also may be reached by phone at (844) 850-5000 or by fax at (844) 850-5010.



Dai



First So. Baptist in 50 years heads chaplains

WASHINGTON (BP) — For the first time since President Eisenhower and the Korean War, a Southern Baptist has been nominated to command the U.S. Army's 5,000 commissioned chaplains.

Based at the Pentagon, Brig. Gen. Douglas L. Carver, 55, has been tapped as the Army's next Chief of Chaplains. If his nomination is confirmed by the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee and the full Senate as expected, Carver will be promoted to major general and awarded his second star during July ceremonies at Fort Belvoir in northern Virginia.

Why has God chosen Carver? "The Scripture talks about how God is the One who raises up leadership," he said in an interview. "For such a time as this, it has appeared that God has raised me up as a Southern Baptist chaplain to provide spiritual leadership for our chaplains in the Army."

With a force of one million men and women worldwide, the Army's goal is to have a chaplain deployed for every battalion of 500-700 soldiers. Most are stationed in Iraq. Afghanistan, and the Balkans.

Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Balkans.
"Our ministry is basically the same whether in war or peace," Carver said, "but obviously, the challenges are much greater in times of war. We're there to sustain the living, care for the wounded and bring honor to those who have lost their lives in conflict.

"In time of war, these activities obviously increase. The desire for spiritual truth, the desire for hope in the midst of chaos and the desire for comfort in times of war's destruction are greatly heightened. Our soldiers are so desperate to reach out for faith, encouragement and hope in times of war."

Although the Army has chaplains in 120-130 nations, Carver is concerned about a current shortage of chaplains. In the active National Guard and Army Reserves, 500 chaplain vacancies exist. For the active regular military, he could use another 100 chaplains.

The soon-to-be two-star general said chaplains must have a ministry of presence with the soldiers and their family members. While not exactly a pastor of a church or an evangelist, they have pastoral and evangelistic roles. It's not an eight-hour-a-day job for the squeamish. It's a 24-hour-a-day job, always on call.

not exactly a pastor of a church or an evangelist, they have pastoral and evangelistic roles.
It's not an eight-hour-a-day job for the squeamish. It's a 24-hour-a-day job, always on call.
"We live with our flock. We go to war
with them. We jump out of planes with
them. We're there to help birth their children and to bury their loved ones.
Everywhere soldiers go, a chaplain is nearby to give them peace and comfort and
remind them that God is present, whether
it's in Baghdad or back in their barracks."

Carver said wartime chaplains are advised to position themselves in combat zones where they can best minister to their soldiers. So when soldiers go out on reconnaissance along Iraq's roadsides often booby-trapped with bombs, a chaplain is there. When a patrol scales the treacherous mountains of Afghanistan, a chaplain is nearby. As 4,000 soldiers recently raked Baghdad's infamous "Triangle of Death" like a fine-tooth comb searching for three men thought to be captured by Al Qaida, several chaplains were there.

Miraculously, not one U.S. Army chaplain has been lost in Iraq or Afghanistan thus far, Carver said.

"I give God the glory that because of His marvelous grace, we have not had a chaplain killed in action since the war began," Carver said. "We have one, a Catholic priest, who is recovering from severe wounds. We've had others wounded. In fact, numerous chaplains have received Purple Hearts. Some have received Bronze Stars."

Originally deployed for 12 months, chaplains endure the same training as their



Carver

troops and are deployed together. Like other combat soldiers, chaplains' deployment has swelled to 15 months, after which they are reunited with their families, retrained and re-focused on their ministries.

"Our chaplains are tired, and their ministry is a very demanding job," Carver said. "I challenge our chaplains to make sure they have a mentor. I have a saying that 'all chaplains need a chaplain.' We remind them that they need a minister in their lives — a battle buddy, a spiritual accountability partner — to whom they can share their personal concerns, griet, angers and other emotions common to us all."

Carver, who accepted Christ at age 11 at

Carver, who accepted Christ at age 11 at Dykes Creek Church in his native Rome, Ga., and was baptized, discipled, and licensed to preach in a SBC church, said he's thankful for his Baptist heritage.

"I have a dear relationship with my church. I was equipped to be a pastor and a chaplain as a result of the work of many godly Baptist Sunday School teachers, wor-

ship leaders, preachers and prayer warriors.
"I thank Southern Baptists for continuing to produce such outstanding young pastors, who are being called as chaplains to do such extraordinary ministry in such a difficult time in the history of our country. I just ask that Baptists continue to pray for our chaplains and to keep sending out chaplains. The work is so tremendous but the laborers are so few."

Carver said there is a great hunger for spiritual truth among American soldiers,

evidenced on this past Easter Sunday at an unnamed Army base where 400 soldiers accepted Christ during a large outdoor service. "From generals to privates, we're seeing lives changed and transformed," he said.

Carver and Sunny, his wife of 35 years — who have moved 25 times during their marriage — have two grown daughters and two grandchildren with a third on the way. His 83-year-old mother Evelyn still lives in Rome and is, as Carver put it, "a tremendous woman

of faith and a prayer warrior who raised me, my brother and sister in the church."

A graduate of the University of Tennessee with a B.A. degree in religious studies, Carver also earned an M. Div. degree at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and an M.S. degree in strategic studies at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa.

An ordained Southern Baptist minister, he has pastored churches in Kentucky, Colorado, and Virginia.

Carver pleads with Southern Baptist and all churches to "take care of your chaplains. Please support them with prayer. Send them notes of encouragement. They need more than candy and cookies. Welcome them home and give them the opportunity to share their experiences and their stories of preaching Christ and ministering to soldiers.

"Reach out and minister to them, because their lives will never be the same as a result of their combat experience. They've seen a lot of grief and brokenness. They need time for healing and restoration. They paid a price when they went in harm's way to the deserts of the Middle East."

Carver, as a chaplain, is endorsed by the North American Mission Board, the endorsing agency for the 1,000-plus Southern Baptist chaplains serving in the U.S. military. In addition to the military, 2,000 more SBC-endorsed chaplains also work in prisons, corporations, law enforcement, and the health industry.



BAPTISTS

THE SECOND . FRONT PAGE

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

May 24, 2007 Vol. 131 No. 21

Looking back

10 years ago

vice. "From generals southern Baptist efforts to aid people devastated by flooding of the Red River in North Dakota and Minnesota continue with the help of six Mississippians. Donna Swarts, from Corinth Church, Magee, spent two weeks as the overall coordinator of Southern Baptist childcare in the Grand Forks area.

20 years ago

Crowder Church, Crowder, passes its goal of 250 in Sunday School, with 289 present. Anthony Atkinson is recognized for inviting the most people, and his photo appears in The Baptist Record. Harvey Sewell is pastor.

50 years ago

His 83-year-old mother Evelyn still lives in Rome and is, as Carver put it, "a Alabama state Baptist officials demand that a group of laymen who have organized for the avowed purpose of white supremacy drop the word "Baptist" from their name. The group is the Baptist Laymen of Alabama, Inc., which was incorporated to fight "philosophies foreign to our beliefs as Christian white men."



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

- 1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
- 2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
- 3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
 (I believe in Jesus.)
- 4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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LIFE REDUCED TO FIVE WORDS

As a general rule I have observed that simplicity usually adds to something being profound. Just think about those things that are the nearest and dearest to our hearts and the guiding stars of our lives. They are usually very simple. In relationship to our country we learn from the time we can barely speak, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America." In most of our homes our kids learn some verses and truths before they even know that they can learn. Those simple statements like, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," or "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," stay with them for life. As time passes it broadens slightly, but we keep those same simple facts from God's Word before us. We learn something like, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." We commit to memory and store in our hearts all those verses that end with, "And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." It covers the scope of a life and yet it is just over a hundred words. I got to thinking about reducing life to five words. What I discovered is that you can just about boil it down to five words in any area or discipline in your life. Let me pass them along to you for what they are worth.

For instance, when it comes to dieting and weight loss, a friend of mind said that he had figured it out and indeed, he had. The five words that held the key to success were, "Eat less and exercise more." I am certainly aware that there are other factors that come into play. Sometimes your body is not functioning like it ought to and your metabolism is not kicking in as you wish it would or at least the way it used



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

too. However, our weight is the result of the fuel we put in our body and expend from it. If you are going to gain weight, you are going to have to take more fuel in, and then you are expending so that the body can pack it on. If you want to get rid of some of it, you have to cut down some and work out a little more. I know very few people who do not have a struggle from time to time in staying away from some of the stuff that their natural cravings say, "Come, and eat me!" It is not easy to avoid food that is not good for you or not needed.

The other piece of this simple statement is exercise more. That is also tough. Have you ever heard someone say or maybe heard the echo of your own voice say, "I just don't have time to exercise?" Most of us who need to be exercising fall back on that wonderful phrase. In truth we really are too busy. We have places we need to go, things we need to do, people we need to see, and work we need to accomplish. We just don't have time. Have you ever stopped and thought that while we may not have time to exercise, we always find time to eat? Well, that is enough about those five words.

I saw the second set of five words in a magazine some years ago. The words referred to how to be a successful leader of a company or business organization. In fact the title of the article was, "The Five Most Powerful Words in Business." I saw the title and I wondered what those five words could be. I flipped through the magazine and found the article. Here is what the author suggested. The five words that can make a difference in an organization are "It will make a difference."

If a leader, a CEO, a pastor, or a president can ever convince those with whom he works that what they are doing will make a difference, then it probably will make a difference. From a biblical standpoint it is glorious to behold how the Lord raised up leaders and ultimately sent His Son to choose His team of disciples and helped them to understand that the thing they were going to be a part of was going to make a difference.

The third cluster of five simple words has to do with stewardship. While there have been many books written and many plans given on how to live, how to save, how to spend, and how to get a hold on your finances, in part it can be boiled down to these five words, "Work more and spend less." Now I am not just trying to encourage folks to be workaholics or misers as far as that goes but being industrious and working honestly and enthusiastically each day is good. Watching what you spend and keeping it within the boundaries of what you have can work wonders in your life

and budget. I know there are other dimensions and certainly other biblical instructions related to giving, tithing, and caring but if you begin with these five words as a foundation, you will be doing a good thing.

One last cluster of five words

may be the five most important words that you will ever hear, and they are not from me. They are from Jesus, and they are the five words that He spoke to a religious leader, who though he was very prominent, did not know the Lord. He had an empty heart and a dismal future. Jesus said to him, "You must be born again." Anybody who has had a personal experience with Jesus knows what it is like to be living under a cloud of guilt, fear, alienation, and sin, and then experience the new life that is in Christ with a new beginning, a new direction, and an everlasting hope. You understand what these words mean. For someone who may never have experienced that, you may wonder if that is real or just church talk.

You must be born again can become the most glorious reality in your life as Jesus will come and bring His eternal life to live in you. You can trust Him right now, forever your life will be changed, and forever you will be His. In fact, you only need five words to invite Jesus into your heart. Right now just say, "Lord Jesus, I need you," and you can meet Him.

Probably the shortest prayer in the entire Bible is the prayer that Peter prayed when he was about to sink and he said, "Lord, save me." Jesus reached out and took hold of him. He will reach out, take hold of you today, and hold you forever.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.

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Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Psalm 85:6

HOMECOMINGS AND REVIVALS

Antioch Church, Monticello: Homecoming, May 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; afternoon singing, 1:30 p.m.; Zack Smith, speaker; Myers family, music.

Bethesda Church, Terry: Homecoming, June 3; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Linuel Jayroe, speaker; Joe Wood, music; Robby Britt, pastor.

Calvary, Pricedale: Homecoming, June 3; fellowship, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; afternoon song and praise service following lunch; Don Pendergrass and Todd Pendergrass, speakers; Ron West, pastor.

Hebron Church, Jones County: 125th anniversary and homecoming, May 26-27; cookout, Sat., 3 p.m.; worship, 6 p.m.; Sun., worship, 10 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner and afternoon service.

Leaf River Church, Smith County: Homecoming, June 10; services, 11 a.m., followed by lunch, cemetery association meeting, and dedication of stained glass windows, 2 p.m. Jim McIntosh, guest speaker.

Liberty Church, Carroll County: Homecoming, June 3; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Gary Tanner, speaker.

Providence Church, Carroll County: Revival, June 3-6; services, 7:30 p.m.; Lanny Haley, speaker; Bennie Rigby, music; Joanna Miller, pianist; Randy Williamson, pastor.

COLLEGE NEWS



1. Baptist Student Union summer missionaries, BMC

1. The Baptist Student Union at Blue Mountain College held a dedication service for 24 BMC students who will be performing mission work this summer. Workers include: Erin Anderson (Bulgaria); Courtney Ferguson (West Africa); Jamie Harrison (China); (Nepal); Brian Jones (Wales); **Pitts** Dallas Angela Bell (Burkina Faso); Kris Beville (Pacific Northwest); Ashley (Colorado); Waldrep Courtney Shelley Arlington); (Mission Carey Hamblin (Canada); Wenzel Taryn (California); LaCasey Russell (Oklahoma); Nika Ginn (Gatlinburg); Becky Stenger (Arizona); Marley Morgan (Pennsylvania); Brittney Cloyd (Garaywa); Ashley H o l l i n g s w o r t h (Garaywa); Jennifer Ingram (Garaywa); Stacy Vick (Garaywa); Daniel Harkins (Central Hills); Chris Ferguson (Youth Weeks); Ashley Reeder (Youth Weeks); Jason Webb (Youth Weeks); Jessica Worsham (Youth Weeks).

 Joseph "Jody" Fail of Bay Springs, sole owner of Fail Communications, Inc., a holding company for Fail Engineering Company, and T2C2, a software company, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from William Carey University

at graduation ceremonies held recently in Hattiesburg. Fail's generous gifts to WCU have provided the newly dedicated multimillion dollar Joseph and Nancy



Fail

and Nancy
Fail Softball Field, the
Missions Plaza and
Missions Tower, and the
Fail-Asbury School of
Nursing building.

3. Obra Quave, retired chair, director and professor of theatre and communication at William Carey University, received the honorary degree of

Doctor of Humane Letters at graduation ceremonies held recently in Hattiesburg. Quave, who retired in 2002 after a 42 year career at Carey, received the John F.

Kennedy
Center
Gold
Medallion
of
Excellence
in 2005.
Presented
by the
Region IV
Kennedy



Quave

C e n t e r
American College Theatre
Festival (KCACTF), the
Gold Medallion is a prestigious honor bestowed
by the Kennedy Center on
rare occasions to a recipient who shows excellence
in teaching theatre.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004 copyrighted 2005

KHJ ALMELXFNPXGXF LX
XHEXFXJ, MHEP GMRRKSXN, PF YMEMXN, PF
YDPHEFO, ELXO RKMJ ELX
NMYU MH ELX NEFXXEN,
KHJ WXNPDSLE LMZ ELKE
ELXO ZMSLE EPDYL MV
ME AXFX WDE ELX
WPFJXF PV LMN SKFZXHE; KHL KN ZKHO KN
EPDYLXJ LMZ AXFX ZXJX
ALPRX.

ZKFU MC: VMVEO-NMC

Clue: M = I

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six:Thirty-Five.

If You Have Lost Money

In The Stock Market

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VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Antioch Church, Columbus: VBS, June 4-8, 9 a.m.-noon, for four-year-olds-6th grade.

Crossgates Church, Brandon: VBS, June 4-8, 9 a.m.-noon, for five-year-olds-5th grade; for information, call (601) 825-2562 or visit www.crossgates.org.

Highland Church, Natchez: VBS, May 28-June 1, 8:30 a.m.-noon; Fun Day, May 26, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Family Day, June 1, noon-1 p.m.

Leaf River Church, Smith County: VBS, June 4-8, 6-8:30 p.m.; preregistration, June 2, 2-4 p.m., with David Hays performing illusions; commencement service, June 8; ages four years-6th grade.

New Hope Church, Foxworth: VBS, June 4-8, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; kickoff, June 3, 1:30 p.m., with registration and water slide; Family Night, June 10, 6:30 p.m.

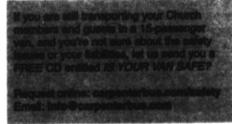
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Bible Drillers, Church Road Church, Horn Lake



2. Bible Drillers, Raymond Road Church, Raymond



3. Bible Drillers, Tuckers Crossing Church, Laurel

- Church Road Church, Horn Lake, recognizes its state Bible Drillers. Shown are Morgan Clark, Hannah Hastings, Holden Hastings, and Kayla Bynum.
- 2. Raymond Road Church, Raymond, recognizes its Bible Drillers: Brooks Warren, Sarah Hardin, Somer Warren, Madison Kirk, Ansley Myers, and Courtney Evans.
- 3. Tuckers Crossing Church, Laurel, recognizes its Bible Drillers. Shown are the participants.
- 4. Pine Church, Walnut Grove, recognizes its Bible Drillers. Shown are Derek Smith and Aaron Shepard.
- The children's church group of Unity Church, luka, recently celebrated the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Shown are the participants.
- Standing Pine Church, Walnut Grove, recognizes its Bible Drillers. Shown are P.J. Perkins, Alex Shepard, Abbie Scott, Hailey Jamison, and Harley Perkins.
- 7. Wheeler Grove Church, Alcorn Co., recognizes its children's Bible drillers and leaders. Front, Matthew Stewart; second row, Shelby Stewart, Tiffany Blackard; back, Nathan Morelock, Bonnie Lancaster, James Andrews, and John Andrews. The church's youth drillers and leader were Kristen Brooks, Daniel Stewart, Amy Wilkinson, and John Mitchell.
- 8. Girls from First Church, Plantersville, recently completed a Princess in Training course, giving the girls instruction in proper posture, table setting, writing thank-you notes, telephone manners, and personal hygiene. The girls later delivered cookies to people in the community. Shown are the participants.



6. Bible Drillers, Standing Pine Church, Walnut Grove



7. Children Bible Drillers, Wheeler Grove Church, Alcorn County



7. Bible Drillers, Wheeler Grove Church, Alcorn County



4. Bible Drillers, Standing Pine Church, Walnut Grove



5. Children's Church group, Unity Church, luka



8. Princess in Training, First Church, Plantersville

JUST FOR THE RECORD



9. GA Mission Madness, Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch



10. wMu, Escatawpa Church, Escatawpa



11. Bible Drillers, Hebron Church, Meridian



12. Drama production, Bethel Church, Columbus

- Longview Heights Church, Olive Branch, hosted GA Mission Madness, including GAs and leaders from Pleasant Hill Church, Olive Branch, and Hernando Church, Hernando. Shown are some of the participants.
- 10. The wMu of Escatawpa, Church, Escatawpa, recently hosted a missions fundraiser honoring mothers with an afternoon tea. Shown are some of the participants.
- 11. Hebron Church, Meridian, recognizes its Bible Drillers. Back row, Jered Johnson, Abby Havard, Shea Smith, Erin Johnson, Kristen Roberts, and Matt Roberts; front row, Noah Johnson, Hunter Graham, and Josh Johnson.
- Bethel Church, Columbus, presented the drama, It All Happened in the City, Apr. 8. Shown are the participants.
- 13. Tuckers Crossing Church, Laurel, recognized Faye Montgomery Andrews for 50 years of service to the children of the church with a memory book, flowers, and a cake decorated with a Bible at a reception. Shown are pastor Eddie Bryant and Andrews.
- 14. On Sunday, Apr. 29, Bill Duncan and his wife were guests at Calvary Church, Pascagoula, where a reception was held for them in the Family Life Center celebrating Duncan's 50 years in the Gospel ministry. Shown are Duncan and his wife.
- 15. New Prospect Church, Oxford, had a homecoming service Apr. 29, at which a offering of \$28,517 was given to pay a building debt of \$16,500. Shown are Ricky Babb, pastor Ken White, and Everet Childers.
- 16. Jeff Byrd, pastor of Pine Level Church, Leakesville, led in the planning of the National Day of Prayer at the Greene County courthouse May 3. Shown are Byrd, Leakesville mayor Bill Brooks, and Wilbur Hall, pastor of Neely Church.
- 17. The wMu of First Church, Ripley, sponsored a ladies luncheon, If Teacups Could Talk, with Betty Jo Jones as guest speaker. Shown are the participants.
- 18. Erin Crane, member of Temple Church, Big Point, will be serving as a summer sojourner missionary



18. Crane



13. Andrews honored, Tuckers Crossing Church, Laurel



14. Duncan honored, Calvary Church, Pascagoula



15. Homecoming, New Prospect Church, Oxford

at the Intracoastal Outreach Program, Myrtle Beach. S.C. She is a junior at East Central High School, Hurley.

19. Coila Church, Coila, is hosting its 6th annual Memorial Day Sing May 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., featuring The Holcomb Sisters, Saving Grace, Spoken 4, Promised Quartet, and Audrey Davis. Food available; love offering will be received. Bring lawn chairs.



16. National Day of Prayer, Pine Level Church, Leakesville



17. wMu, First Church, Ripley

BAPTISTS

OBITUARY

James G. Haggard, Sr., of Conway, Ark., died Apr. 29 at Baptist Health Medical Center, Little Rock, Ark. He



was preceded Haggard in death by his parents, James and Elnora a sister, **Eddith** Haggard, Haggard, brothers, Wesley, Hugh, Archie, and Lucian Haggard, and a son, James Haggard. He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Sarah Haggard, son John Haggard, daughters, Jenny Lind Allan, Nan Keathley, and Cynthia Haggard; and sever-al grandchildren, great-grand-children, nieces and nephews. He was a graduate of Mississippi College, Southwestern Seminary, and was dean of students at **Ouachita Baptist University,** Arkadelphia, Ark. He also taught at Clark College and served as pastor at several churches in Mississippi and Arkansas.

MS Positions

BAPTIST CHURCH, Plantersville, Miss., seeks a part-time Youth Minister. Please submit resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 487, Plantersville, MS 38862. Or email to firstbaptist800@comcast.net. MINISTER OF MUSIC and education needed: First Baptist Church, Boyle, Miss., is currently seeking a full-time Minister of Music and Education. More details available. Contact us at FBCBoyle@cableone.net. Send resumes via email or P.O. Box 218, Boyle, MS 38730.

BROOKSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, Brooksville, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational music director. Send resumes to Janice Kesler, music chairman, 2922 Fire Tower Rd., Crawford, MS 39743.

CENTER HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Hamilton, Mississippi, is seeking a bivocational Minister of Music. Please send resume to Center Hill Baptist Church, Music Search Committee, P.O. Box 59, Hamilton, MS, 39746.

Illegal downloading not taken seriously

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) -Nearly 90% of teenagers polled by The Barna Group in 2004 indicated music piracy — "including copying a CD for a friend or downloading nonpromotional music online for free" — is either morally acceptable or not a moral issue. The study, conducted for the Gospel Music Association, found that just eight percent said such activities were immoral.

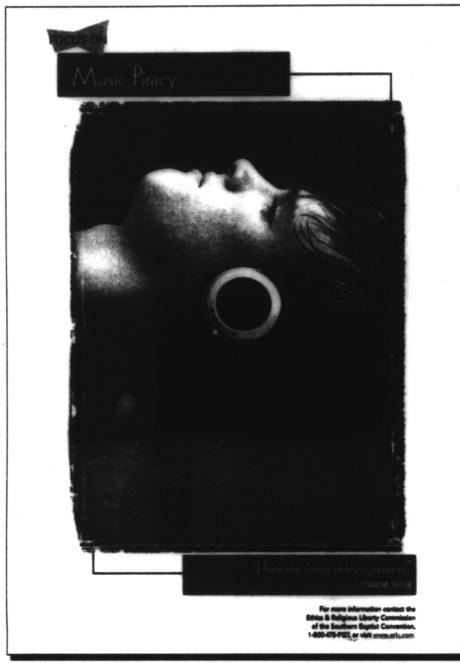
This is an "incredibly serious problem," said Brian Mayes, president of Nashville Publicity Group. "I don't think people outside of the music industry realize what goes into making an album, how many people are actually affected and receive their income through the sale of a record," he said in an interview.

Mayes said he has heard people argue that artists, who are "worth millions of dollars," can afford some consumers getting their music without

paying for it.
"It's the mix engineer, the background vocalists, the studio players, the marketing guy at the label, the distributor, and the guy who boxed the CD to send it to the stores — there are a lot of people involved who are counting on that sale," Mayes explained.

Global music sales have fallen 16% in five years, "to a large extent because of the proliferation of free unautho-rized music," according to a report prepared by the International Federation

Phonographic Industry (ifpi.org). According to the Barna study, four out of every five teenagers surveyed engaged in some type of music piracy in the six months before the survey, "including making copies of CDs for other people, downloading free music (other than promotions or



giveaways), or uploading their own music files to the Internet to share with others."

"It is changing the industry and the way we work," Mayes said. The drop in music sales, therefore revenue, at least partly explained by piracy, is prompting some recording companies to trim their marketing budget and stick to proven artists."

Unfortunately, "born again Christian teens" behave no differently than non-Christian teens when it comes to sharing and downloading music illegally. "Just 10% of Christian teens believe that copying CDs for friends and unauthorized music downloading morally wrong, compared to six percent" of their non-born again peers, Barna reported.

In fact, many young people surveyed said they did not know the practice was illegal. That's not surprising when one considers that for many students, their moral authority on the issue was a friend (28%). Only two percent of students named their youth pastor as a "source of moral perspective about music downloading."

Just because your child is using the Internet to get music doesn't mean they are breaking the law, Mayes added. "The concept of downloading, being able to get your music instantly, is a great thing, but you need to pay for it," he said.

Legitimate downloads often have an embedded code, a unique license designed to prevent the purchaser from using the song for anything but their personal use.

Music is readily and legally available online, from sources as diverse as iTunes and walmart.com. In fact, the IFPI report revealed 420 mil-

lion single tracks were downloaded legally from the Internet in 2005. That's 20 times more than two years earlier, according to the report.

"When you purchase music online, you are not taking anything away from people who make their living off that music," Mayes added.

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IASPER COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION located in Bay Springs, Ms is seeking a part-time bi-vocational Association Missions Director. This is a part-time position and the position does not include housing facilities. Please send resumes no later than July 1, 2007 to Jasper County Baptist Association, P.O. Box 385, Bay Springs, Ms. 39422.

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Clearview Baptist Church of Birmingham, position of full-time Children's Pastor. Send resume to: Clearview Baptist FOR LEASE OR SALE: Byram Day Care Pinson, AL 35126 or email Connie@clearviewbaptist.com.

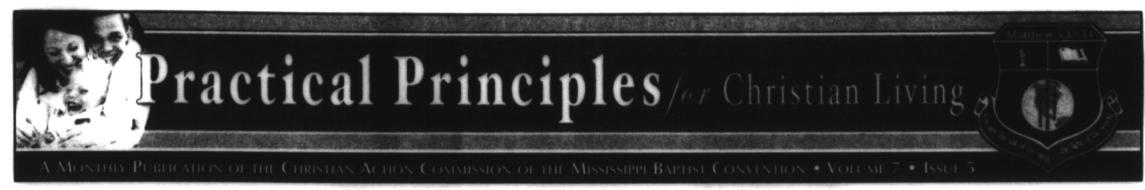
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How Important is Daddy?

tudies show that the breakdown of the traditional family is the root cause of many social problems in America. If more children were raised in loving two-parent homes with a mother and a father, there would be a decrease in crime, drug use, and teen pregnancy. Some young people who do not have the presence of a loving father in their lives are angry and hurt and are acting out against society.

Boys and girls react differently to the absence of a father. Girls experience intense separation anxiety, denial, identification with the lost parent, and a hunger for masculine attention. Boys are more likely to use drugs, commit crimes,

and end up in prison.

Adolescent girls, who experienced divorce when they were younger than nine, reported becoming involved with alcohol and drugs in higher proportions than girls from families with a mother and a father at home. Girls without a father at home are more likely to have lower self-esteem and to engage in sexual activity. These girls see the loss of their father as a rejection of them. They grow up without the day to day interaction with a man who is attentive and

caring. Without this constant source of emotional nourishment, a girl's sense of being valued does not seem to thrive.

The following statistics state the social effects of fatherlessness:

1) BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS/ RUNAWAYS/ HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS/CHEMICAL ABUSERS/ SUICIDES

85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (Source: Center for Disease Control)
90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census)
71% of all high school dropouts come

• 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (Source: National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools.)

• 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes (Source: Rainbows for all God's Children.)

• 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census)

2) JUVENILE DELINQUENCY/ CRIME/GANGS

• 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (Source: Criminal Justice & Behavior, Vol. 14, p. 403-26)

70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice)
 85% of all youths sitting in prisons

• 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Source: Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections)

These statistics translate to mean that children from a fatherless home are:

5 times more likely to commit suicide.
32 times more likely to run away.

32 times more likely to run away.
 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders.

14 times more likely to commit rape
9 times more likely to drop out of

high school.
10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances.

• 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

3) TEENAGE PREGNANCY

"Daughters of single parents are 53%

more likely to marry as teenagers and 164% more likely to have a premarital birth," Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, Atlantic Monthly.

• Daughters of single parents are 2.1 times more likely to have children during their teenage years than are daughters from intact families. The Good Family Man, David Blankenhorn.

• 71% of teenage pregnancies are to children of single parents. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to teach others the truth of God's Word. God teaches us that the family unit is the building block of society. Until we as a nation make a commitment to the traditional family, we are going to suffer from the effects of children growing up without daddy. There is nothing wrong with our world that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will not remedy. What a wonderful picture we have of our Heavenly Father, loving us and providing for us the way of salvation through His Son. Those of us who are fathers should follow God's example and love and provide for our children.

Baptist associational movement takes southward turn

Third in a series

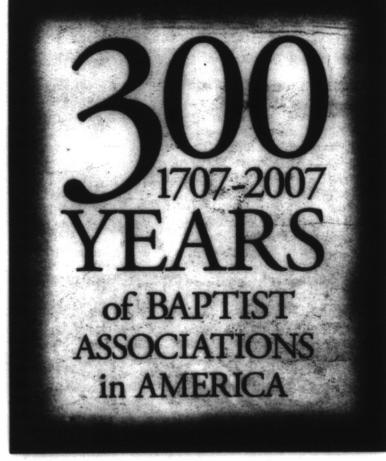
By Frank Lay Correspondent

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Philadelphia Baptist Association began sending missionaries into different parts of the American colonies. The Philadelphia association played a vital role in the formation of other associations. In 1751, the second Baptist association in America was organized in Charleston, South Carolina. The Sandy Creek Baptist Association was organized in North Carolina in 1758. Both the Charleston and Sandy Creek Baptist Associations continue to be active today.

The first Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, was actually organized in Kittery, Maine, under the leadership of Pastor William Screven. Screven had been a member of the Baptist church in Boston, but because of persecution from the Puritans, he led a group of believers to southern Maine in 1682 and formed the first Baptist church in that colony.

However, persecution from the state church continued. In 1686, Pastor Screven and twenty-eight members of the church in Maine emigrated by boat to Charleston and established the first Baptist church in the southern colonies.

In 1749, a young minister named Oliver Hart left the Philadelphia association and became pastor of the Baptist church in Charleston. Influenced by his connections with the Philadelphia Baptist Association, Hart invited repre-



sentatives from Charleston, Welsh Neck, Ashley River, and Euhaw Baptist churches to meet and organize the first association in the South.

The Charleston Baptist Association was organized in 1751. Hart introduced to the fledgling association the principles he had learned from the Philadelphia association. In the latter part of the eigh-

teenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, Baptists from the Charleston association would play a prominent role in introducing Baptist work in the Southwestern part of the Mississippi Territory. Shubal Stearns was a

Baptist preacher who had been converted under the preaching of George Whitefield. Stearns received a letter from a friend inviting him to North Carolina where there was not a Baptist preacher within a hundred miles. Accepting this as from the Lord, Stearns and several others journeved through the Shenandoah Valley and across the Blue Ridge into North Carolina. Settling at Sandy Creek in 1755, they organized the Sandy Creek Baptist Church and built a church building even before constructing their own homes.

Stearns was a fervent preacher who preached hard against sin and followed the example of George Whitefield in proclaiming the necessity of the new birth. Stearns had a dream of sending out preachers and planting churches throughout the South. By 1758, the Sandy Creek Baptist Association was organized. The Sandy Creek association

was birthed during a period of revival known as the Great Awakening. From its beginning, the association had a heart for missions that reached far beyond their local geographic area. In 17 years, the Sandy Creek association became the mother, grandmother, and great grandmother of 42 churches from which sprang 125 ministers of the Gospel. In fact, by 1770 the Sandy Creek association had grown to the extent that they formed two new associations, one in South Carolina and the other in Virginia. The churches in North Carolina preserved the Sandy Creek name.

The first three associations in America contributed greatly to the rapid increase of Baptist churches in America. In time, Baptist associations encouraged the formation of state conventions. In 1821, representatives from three associations met and organized the South Carolina Baptist Convention. Six of the nine representatives present at that meeting were from the Charleston Baptist Association.

Nine state Baptist conventions were in existence prior to the organization of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Next week: The first Baptist associations in America.



Lay is associational missions director for Carroll-Montgomery Association in Winona. He may be contacted at carrmont@bellsouth.net. Next week: The mother church of Mississippi Baptists.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



20. Bible Drillers, Westwood Church, Meridian



21. Homecoming, Edon Church, Stringer



22. Eastern European visitors, Calvary Church, Parchman



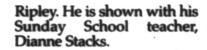
23. Kykendall sponsors food drive, Concord Church, Booneville

- 20. Westwood Church, Meridian, recognizes its Bible Drillers. Shown are Emily Hicks, Hannah Davis, Jordan Davis, Payton Lippert, and Emma Reeves.
- Edon Church, Stringer, recently celebrated homecoming. Shown are the participants.
- 22. Calvary Chapel, Parchman, hosted Erik and Elena Brewer (center and right), church planters in Eastern Europe. The Brewers also spoke in the Hispanic mission in Cleveland; their interpreter was a new Christian, 7th grader Jose Rojas (left).
- David Kuykendall, Concord Church, Booneville, sponsored a food drive for the Good Samaritan Center in



BAPTISTS

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- 24. The RAs of Scooba Church, Scooba, held a walk-a-thon dubbed Cans for the Coast Apr. 4, resulting in over 400 pounds of food. The boys walked a combined total of 7.5 miles during the 30 minute event. Shown, from left, are Tommy Reynolds, Parker Dial, Mason Reynolds, Brett Whitaker, and Jake Owen.
- 25. McAdams Church,
 McAdams, recently held a
 Motor Marathon to raise
 money for the Annie
 Armstrong Easter Offering.
 Shown, from left, are Jeffery
 Jones, Katie Grace Jones,
 Chole Cloninger, Morgan
 Pickle, and Elena Harman.
 James Young, pastor.
- 26. Concord Church, Booneville, recently held a fish fry to climax the dedication of their new Family Life Center. Shown are Mike Mauney, Lyle Bullock, Brian Kuykendall, and Kenneth Mauney.
- 27. Border Springs Church, Caledonia, dedicated their Doyle Knight Family Life Center Feb. 12, and on May 21, the church celebrated the note burning on the building. Shown are the pastor and some of the deacons and building committee members.
- 28. Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle, is hosting a gospel sing featuring The Professors and Southern Psalm June 2, 7 p.m. No admission, but a love offering will be taken to defray expenses for a Honduras mission trip.





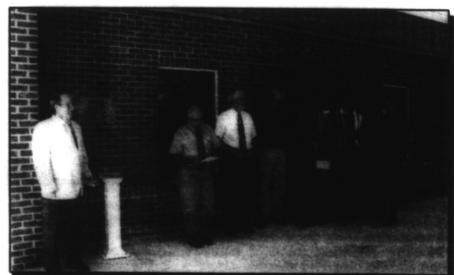
24. RAs, Scooba Church, Scooba



25. Motor Marathon, McAdams Church, McAdams



26. Fish Fry, Concord Church, Booneville



27. Family Life Center dedication, Border Springs Church, Caledonia

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Be Reconciled

Genesis 50:15-21; Matthew 5:23-24; Colossians 3:12-15

By Angie Boydstun

Jim Wallis is the editor of Sojourners magazine. He recently shared about a decades-long rift between him and Bill Bright of Campus Crusade. He and Bill strongly disagreed about their political views. They had very different ideas about how religion should affect the political arena. Wallis even did an expose on a "Religious Right" political group Bright supported. For years, the two were at

odds. There were bitter words exchanged through the media. Over twenty years later, they found themselves together at a Wallis function. approached Bright to mend their disagreement. As they each apologized, they realized that their goals were really the same - reaching and teaching people about Christ. Soon after this meeting, Bright sent a donation

to support one of Jim Wallis' ministries. It was one of his last acts before he died.

We should be ready to restore a relationship, regardless of the reasons for the rift. Genesis 50:15-21 shows us how we should react when someone approaches us for reconciliation. Joseph's brothers were worried after their father's death. Because of all they had done, they feared Joseph would seek revenge against them. They sent a message to him, sharing their father's request that he forgive them.

The brothers then approached Joseph and fell down before him. They declared themselves his slaves. Joseph, however, declined to judge them. He pointed out how God had overridden their actions and brought good from the wrong they had done. Joseph assured them he would provide for them.



In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus had strong words about the importance of reconciliation. instructed His followers to recognize the serious-ness of broken relationships. He used an example of one who came to worship and remem-bered that someone held something against him. The believer was to

go immediately and reconcile with the other person, then

return to worship.

Jesus obviously placed a high value on reconciliation. He placed it above the act of worship in this case. We should take it just as seriously, making ourselves fit for worship. Sometimes our attempts at reconciliation may not be successful. But when we make a sincere attempt to restore a relationship, we can engage in acceptable worship

In Colossians 3, Paul shares another principle about reconciliation. He urged his readers in verses 12-15 to live a certain way as "God's chosen people." He called them to compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Here Paul says we should accept one another, forgiving as Christ forgave us. Even if we are the offended party, we should take action. "If anyone has a complaint against another," he is to forgive graciously and freely as the Lord forgave.

The root word for "forgiven" in verse 13 is based on the root word for "grace." Forgiveness is an expression of grace. It is not a question of what the forgiven person deserves.

Forgiveness does not automatically cancel the consequences of past actions. Neither is it based on feelings, forgetting, or excusing. It is a deliberate act of the will. We make the choice to forgive an offense and mend a relationship.

Christians are to exhibit love above all of the virtues mentioned, verse 14 emphasizes. Love is the perfect bond, holding us together in unity. When our fellowships are bound together in love, relationships are strengthened. If love is lacking, there is often disagreement and disharmony.

In verse 15, "peace" has the meaning conveyed by the Hebrew term shalom. It indicates "well-being and wholeness under God's rule." Believers are to live in a harmony that comes from our commitment to Christ. We should let the peace of Christ rule among us, enjoying completeness as members of a unified body.

What if Jim Wallis had never approached Bill Bright? What if Bill Bright had rebuffed him? influential believers would have remained at odds. The two would not have made peace if Wallis had not sought Bright out. They would not have made peace if Bright had not accepted his overture.

God's plan is that we facilitate reconciliation when we are in conflict with others. Because we belong to Christ, we have a responsibility to make restored relationships a priority. We should take action to reconcile with others, forgiving them completely when we are wronged. Then we will experience the peace that comes from belonging to the body.

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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Maximum Effort Is Required

2 Peter 3:1-18

By Ivan Parke

Chapter three begins with a "purpose" statement, the reason why Peter wrote a second letter to the same readers (v. 1): "that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" (v. 2). Disclosing his intent logically follows the lengthy censure of false teachers in chapter two. Peter's readers, bombarded with "heresies" (2:1), "false words" (2:3), "deceptions" (2:13), and "errors" (v. 17) would struggle to "remember the [right] words."

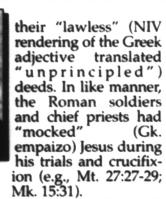
Chapter three is a response to two troublesome realities: [a] Rise of Religious Scoffers and [b] Delay of the Second Coming. The twenty-first century surprisingly resembles the first century. God's Word accomplishes will, however many ridicule it or however few believe it.

Read Isaiah 55:8-11 and Hebrews 4:12.

In chapter three, "word" (vv. 2, 5, 7) and "promise" (vv. 4, 9, 13) appear three times; "commandment" (v. "letters" (v. 16), and "Scriptures" (v. 16) appear once.

Critics and heretics read God's Word Peter described them as "untaught" (v. 16), "unstable" (v. 16), and "unprincipled" (v. 17). According to J. N. D. Kelly, the Greek adjective, translated "untaught," indicates a lack of qualifications (A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude, 373).

Critics disparage what they read, especially the prophecies ("promise"). In verses 3-4, Peter quoted the "mockers" (Gk.



Critics and heretics "distort" (v. 16) what they read. The Greek verb, translated "distort," depicts twisting or warping, even "perverting" (Kelly, 373). Peter reminded his readers

that God's Word determines ALL reality, a fact that critics and heretics "deliberately forget" (v.

5, NIV) or "ignore" (see KJV).

Verses 5-6 link the past to
God's Word: [a] He spoke briefly, and the creation materialized (Gen. 1:1-2:3); [b] He announced a global flood, then it rained (Gen. 6:3, 5-7).

Verses 7-9 link the present to God's Word. Today is the "day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2; see

"reserved," means "to store up" (see Rom. 2:5) or "to lay up," oftentimes treasure. Verses 10-13 link the future to

God's Word: [a] His prophets heralded the "Day of the Lord" (e.g., Jl. 2:11; Am. 5:18-20; Zeph. 1:14-18; Mal. 4:5); [b] His prophet Isaiah anticipated new heavens and a new earth (Is. 65:17; 66:22).

Peter concluded chapter three, reminding his readers that the Scriptures were their stability. The Greek noun sterigmos, translated 'steadfastness" (v. 17), contrasts the Greek adjective asteriktos, translated "unstable" (v. 16).

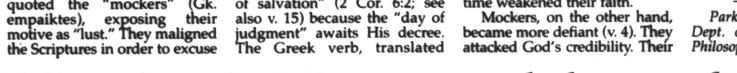
2. God's timing trumps our

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus informed his disciples, "When you see all these things, recognize that [the Son of Man] is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place" (Mt. 24:33-34). Firstcentury Christians saw themselves as that generation. Consequently, the passage of time weakened their faith. confidence was their routine, predictable and controllable; just like Noah's generation, "eating and drinking ... marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away" (Mt. 24:38-39a).

In verse 8, Peter explained that God is not bound by time. Therefore, concepts such as "slow" (v. 9) or "delay" do not apply to Him. What we perceive as "slowness" (v. 9) is actually God's patience (vv. 9, 15). Credit card companies did not invent the "grace period!"

God's patience benefits believer and heathen; more time for "salvation" (v. 15) or diligence (v. 14). Peter charged his readers to consider their "conduct" (v. 11). He emphasized five qualities: [a] "holy" (v. 11), [b] "godliness" (v. 11), [c] "in peace" (v. 14), [d] "spotless" (v. 14), and [e] "blameless" (v. 14), and [e] "blameles 14). He also encouraged expectancy (vv. 12, 14).

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Chaplain sees war's toll, God's hand during Iraq tour

By Tammy Sharp Correspondent

FORT POLK, La. (BP) — Southern Baptist Army chaplain Pete Keough is no stranger to war and the loss it brings,

nor the mysterious ways of God.
Stationed in Baghdad from October
2005 to September 2006, Keough, a captain
with about 1,400 soldiers under his spiritual care on 11 different bases in a 300-mile radius, saw hundreds of soldiers dedicate their lives to Christ during that period. He also saw soldiers lose their lives, some without the saving grace of Christ.
"I would travel all of northern, central

and southern Baghdad visiting soldiers, doing ministry in all those places," Keough said. "We actually were able to baptize more than 25 in makeshift baptismals that were either large engine containers or old water tubs that we found. We were pretty resourceful.
"We also had six soldiers surrender to

fulltime gospel ministry that year," he continued. "Two are [now] in seminary." In addition, Keough led a weekly worship service Wednesday nights at the main base camp. Starting with four soldiers, Keough saw the worship service grow to nearly 100 every week by the end of his tour.

"That was amazing," he said, "but there's a hard side, too. A war zone by its very nature brings death, and some of those deaths inevitably hit very close to home."

Keough, from St. Augustine, Fl., has been in the Army 18 years. He entered the chaplaincy in 2001. "I became a Christian while an enlisted soldier in the Army," he said.

Though he'd grown up in church, he had never made a profession of faith. It wasn't until after Keough's marriage in 1993 that his spiritual state became an issue. His wife Amy, active in church, began praying for her husband to go to church with her. It wasn't long before her prayer was answered in a big way.

In the summer of 1994, Keough attended a Sunday evening service where he had a major realization that he was lost and had been living a lie for years. "I told myself for years I was a Christian, but I wasn't. I wasn't living as

Scripture teaches.



"That Monday following, I remember getting on my knees at my house, distraught, throwing my hands in the air and asking God to forgive me," he recounted. "It was a radical experience. Within a couple of months I knew I was called to preach. I couldn't get away from that one."

Not long after, Keough began attending the Baptist College of Florida near Fort Rucker, Ala., continuing also with

his military service. After graduating from New Orleans Seminary in 2003, he reported for duty to Fort Polk where he's been stationed since, except for his tour of duty in Iraq. One of a few assistant pastors at Fort Polk's Main Post Chapel, Keough supports a contemporary Christian service that he described as quite a lot like a

contemporary Baptist service.

Becoming a chaplain was no difficult leap, Keough said. As he continued in both military service and spiritual training, God's call became ever clearer. "The more I was around soldiers, the more I saw it as a ministry," he said.

A tour of duty in Iraq where soldiers

face their own mortality and faith daily reinforced that view. "It's an interesting dynamic," Keough said. "Soldiers go into war knowing that death happens, but there's nothing you can do to change how much it hurts when it happens to someone close to you. You pray for the best and prepare for the worst.

"You go through all the emotions: anger, sadness, disbelief, and then you go through the grief, and you can then go



EVER VIGILANT — Army Staff Sergeant Andreas Contreras (foreground) checks the perimeter for Army Command Sergeant Major Mark Green (left) and Army Chaplain Pete Keough, who are standing just inside a whitewashed building in Baghdad at midday. Contreras, who guarded Green and Keough, later was killed by a roadside bomb on his way to pick them up. (BP photo)

into recovery. You have to recover. Our soldiers did very well in that process."

Dealing with death's impact can become almost instinctive for those who face it every day, and time is of the essence for survivors, who must not only grieve for their comrades but face the ever-present possibility of their own deaths," the chaplain said.

"When we lost a soldier, I would immediately take the group of people, that very day, within hours, and get together with them to do traumatic event management," Keough said. As an evangelical chaplain, Keough also applied a much more spiritual aspect to grief counseling than a non-evangelical chaplain might.

Encouraging soldiers to talk about the death and how it made them feel was a crucial part of the counseling, he said. It was important that they not hold their feelings in, he added. "The ones who needed to talk more, we'd do that," Keough said.

Besides caring for the survivors, the chaplain also memorialized every single soldier who died. "Each death affects you differently," Keough said, who experienced his own grief when his squad leader was killed 10 months into

Staff Sergeant Andreas Contreras, the personal security detachment squad leader in charge of driving Keough along with the Task Force Command Sergeant Major Mark Green throughout Iraq and Baghdad, was killed. He was "IED'd" as soldiers say, meaning "killed by a roadside bomb," on his way to pick up his two charges, both of whom had grown to love and respect the man responsible for their safety.

"It still hurts," Keough said. "I don't think you ever forget or ever fully stop thinking about it. By God's grace you recover and move forward.

"When he was killed, I was absolutely broken, but through that event I realized two things. First, God literally picked me up and did everything through me [My ministry] is God's call on me," emphasizing that God takes responsibility for that call.

The second thing Keough said he realized was the truth of Romans 8:12. All things do work together for the good of those who love the Lord, he said. "My command sergeant, Major Mark Green... ended up coming to faith in Christ by seeing how I dealt with [Contreras' death]. He gave his life to Jesus, and I was able to baptize him several days later. He literally came to faith through this tragedy."

Green was in charge of taking care of the same soldiers the chaplain cared for, except from an Army perspective rather than Keough's spiritual perspective. "I rode with him because I knew he was going to get around," Keough said. "We went everywhere together.

Keough and Green had been on leave together back in the States and had just flown back. "As soon as we got on the ground [in Baghdad], we called for the squad to come get us," Keough said.
"On the way, they were hit by a roadside bomb, which killed Contreras. We were called at the airport and told he had been killed. That was devastating."

After another squad picked the two men up, they went to the Combat Support Hospital to visit those who had been wounded in the incident. Finding that the wounded were doing okay, the two then traveled back to their base camp to view Contreras' body before it was transported home.

"I was able to say a prayer for his family over his remains," Keough said, and then that night, we put him on a helicopter, and several hundred soldiers saluted him as he was flown away."

Probably the hardest part of the loss was that Contreras was not a Christian, Keough said. "That's what still stinks. It wasn't for a lack of trying, though, I'll tell you that."

Despite the pain over Contreras' apparent lack of faith, Keough remains amazed about what he calls the "divine residual effect" of his friend's death when several weeks afterward, Keough and Green were coming off a mission and, as was his habit, Keough led the group in prayer thanking God for their safety and survival.

"[Green] pulled me aside and said, 'Chaplain, I've seen something I've never seen before. I've never seen God work in such amazing ways.' He told me he knew he needed Jesus to be his Lord and Savior and had asked Him that day."

Green wanted to follow with believer's baptism and for as many people to witness it as possible. "We had a big baptism, with lots of soldiers," Keough said. "When people hear a sergeant major is being baptized, they want to see it. It was amazing.

The effects continued, Keough said, as afterwards at least one other soldier came to be baptized and more approached the chaplain with questions about faith.

As for Keough himself, serving in war-torn Iraq with death ever-present has taught him to be much bolder about sharing his faith. "We don't know when our last day is, our last minute," he said. "I've been IED'd, shot at, mortared, yet here I still stand unscathed and uninured. It's so much more crystal clear. I'm not worried about tomorrow. I'm concerned about His Kingdom work today, because that's what He's given me is today."

Though Keough has talked with some of Contreras' family members and sent his parents a letter, the chaplain has not been able to talk with them personally, something he's looking forward to doing one day.

"I'm trusting that God will put the words in my mouth," Keough said. "I'll tell them what a great man they raised. I'll definitely thank them for the honor of serving with such a great American, and I'm sorry for their loss. I'll tell them how much I loved him and how much he meant to me."

Sharp is a staff writer with the Louisiana Baptist Message, the news journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.